

Col. W. F. Saunders

THE RIVER PRESS.

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The International Sanitary Conference in session at Washington, ended its labors by doing—nothing.

The anti-monopoly league now has an organization in 20 of the 24 assembly districts of New York. The Brooklyn league has been making progress in organizing King's county.

"Dizzy" has been having a hard time of it, between gout, a prospect of rivalry from Salisbury in the Troy leadership, and the rampant liberals. The gout complaint is getting better.

COL. FRED. GRANT got tired of serving his country as an army officer and has resigned to assume a position as civil engineer on the Chicago, Texas and Mexican railway, in which his father and father-in-law are heavily interested.

TELEGRAPHIC advices state that the fight between Conkling and Garfield has unsettled the latter person, while other reports state he deliberately created the issue to ascertain if the Senate could usurp the sole executive functions of the government. The latter statement is probably correct.

The Democrats, in their treatment of Mahone, state that they will cover him with an unusual amount of dye stuff, which will be thrown by their most experienced mud-slingers. Unless they display more skill than they have heretofore, the result will be a reaction equal to that indulged in by the Wife of Bath.

The people of Benton have now a signal opportunity for a display of that hospitality and courtesy which should be shown for the many strangers and visitors who will sojourn with us during court season; and we hope they will take away with them an idea of the River City that is worthy of her prospects, and a credit to her people.

The Senators all feel good over the present prospect of an indefinite session, and both parties are promising each other that they neither will give up an inch of ground. Conkling is reported as having recently described the situation thus: "The President has placed me in a situation where I must commit suicide or murder, and I have chosen murder."

The East seems phenomenally affected with storms this spring. Dispatches of the 15th inst. indicate a heavy snow storm in the New England States, embracing New York City, which is said to be worse than any of mid-winter. In Texas a heavy frost was reported to have occurred on the night of the 13th, doing considerable damage to corn, cotton, and vegetables generally. Here in Montana we are having weather that drives the loungee into the shade of his vine and fig tree.

The Nihilists who were captured and convicted for complicity in the assassination, were hanged on the 15th, an immense concourse of spectators witnessing the execution. The appeals of Russakoff and Michaeloff were submitted to the Czar, but he replied that the sentence must be carried out. The condemned were escorted from the fortress to the place of execution by Cossacks and infantry, with drums beating and rifles playing. They were very firm except Russakoff, who fainted at the last moment. Thus ends the second act.

The newly-pledged officials of Silver Bow county have been enjoined from acting, on the ground that owing to irregularity in the manner of proceeding, and a technicality in the law, Silver Bow county is not a legal existence. The citizens of Butte are said to be using the "strongest words in the English language" to express their indignation, and these words are among the adjective expletives, with all they may imply. The Deer Lodge people have not lost their cunning and they show that some things may be done as well as others.

The net indebtedness of Custer county was, on March 10th, 1881, \$52,660.14; on March 10th, 1880, \$35,349.24; an increase of \$27,311.00, or more than 100 per cent. in a little over a year.

The revenue collected during the last fiscal year was \$15,364.86 while warrants were issued in the same time amounting to \$28,554.63, and adding accounts allowed at the March issue, \$37,213.00.

Since the county was organized warrants have been issued for \$71,639.27, of which have been paid and cancelled \$32,705.36, or considerably less than one-third.—*Acant Courier.*

The above figures convey a lesson which this county can study with great advantage. New communities have a faculty for creating indebtedness without regard to future possi-

bilities and consequences; and when they are created, as in the above case, and, also in a great measure in this county, without there having been any judicious application made of the funds, in the way of substantial public improvements, the case assumes the phase of reckless extravagance. The greater part of this enormous increase has been due to the extravagant salaries paid to officials, and it would seem that our county organizations were created for no other purpose than to afford measures of personal relief for needy officials. In the case of Custer county the indebtedness has reached the incredible sum of ten per cent. on her assessed valuation, and although she has before her a prospect of great enhancement in her valuation, she will have with that valuation so much to do in the way of legitimate improvement, that she will do well to keep pace with it, and if she is not careful will stultify herself to that degree that her future will be ruined. The people and property owners of this and our county can only preserve themselves from bankruptcy by placing men in office who not only have ability and honesty in administration, but who are also sufficiently interested in the county and its future that they will have a personal as well as general interest in economical administration, and careful in creating debt to see that only enterprises which add to the value of the county are forwarded, and who will labor to repress extravagant salaries.

TO THE FARMERS OF MONTANA.

The farmers and stock-men of the United States will have to meet the latest attempt, or rather success of monopoly with vigor, for its shafts are leveled at them directly and solely. The manufacture of barbed wire has been restricted to one Massachusetts firm by a piece of judicial legerdemain, which favors strongly of subtraction, division and silence in the reasons which animated the decision of Judge Blodgett. Upon what hair-splitting technicality the decision was made, the following will show:

"The testimony as to the state of the art showed that fence-wire, and wire-fences, and wires composed of two or more strands laid or twisted together, were old at the time Hunt and Glidden entered the field, and that fences, long before Hunt's invention, had been armed with spikes or other projecting points for the purpose of making them more effective barriers. The use of pickets, spikes, or area railings, or broken glass on the top of walls would come under a similar head; but the most that could be said of them would be that they narrowed the field for the exercise of inventive faculty and limited the range of the patents. As to the question of patentability, a device to be patented must, of course, be the result of inventive genius, and not a mere mechanical adaptation of old things to new uses. It was, however, exceedingly difficult to draw the dividing line between the two. If barbed wire had ever been applied to any other use it would not have required inventive skill to afterwards apply it to fences; but there was no evidence that such had been the case. It required invention to devise and produce a wire that could be applied to fences. In the absence of other test, court had assumed that the fact of the acceptance of a new device or combination by the public, and putting it into extensive use, is evidence that it was the product of invention. In other words, utility was suggestive of originality."

The absurdity of a decision affecting unfavorably one third of the population of the United States, and our greatest interest, and only benefiting one man, on such flimsy grounds is evident. The American farmer is compelled to use it, for the high price of lumber and its perishable nature precludes it for this purpose, and in these Western treeless countries the necessity for the barbed wire is absolute. In 1880, 80,000 miles of wire fence was built, and will probably by the close of the present year reach 100,000 miles. When one manufacturer imposes a royalty of 15 or 20 per cent. on all this vast production, and when the vast possibilities implied in the use of barbed wire are likely to run up into half a million of miles in the next four years, this barbed wire monopoly will prove itself the greatest of them all. The royalty is \$30 per mile, and last year amounted to \$2,400,000. Two and a half millions per year from an industry now in its infancy, not as legitimate profit on the cost of manufacture, but exacted as a tribute to "ingenuity," shows plainer than anything the nature of the monopoly and the terrible tax exacted from American farmers.

It is well to reward inventive genius, and such should be stimulated by every reasonable incentive. But to exact a tribute of three or four millions a year is not reward to the inventor, but a brazen-faced robbery of the consumer, and is a plain travesty on the patent laws, and shows a necessity for concerted action on the part of our farmers and merchants with that just inaugurated by the merchants and artisans of the East against the encroachment, and for the suppression of all such shams and schemes.

The farmers of Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri, Illinois and Kansas are organizing for the purpose of contesting the validity of the decision, and they should have the assistance and support of the entire agricultural community of the country. Stock-men and farmers of Montana should organize at once; or-

ganize in the townships, counties, and in the Territory, and let the Territorial organization unite with those of sister States and Territories. A united effort will break down the monopoly and relieve the farmers of their greatest and most direct source of tribute robbery.

The RIVER PRESS will furnish such information relative to the organization throughout the country to those who wish to organize, as will place them in direct communication and harmonious working with the general organization. We call upon all to organize for protection against the whole flock of cormorants whose monopolizing spirit is gradually absorbing both their liberties and property.

WE were handed the following letter, written by a gentleman of Troy, Ohio:

"Will you be kind enough to mail me a copy of your leading newspaper or some other publication, setting forth what, if any, advantages are offered by your city and section of the Territory for immigrants. We are told here by the daily papers that in your latitude and region of country you have been enjoying fine spring weather, favorable for agricultural interests and stock. Would be glad to learn the facts."

The advantages offered by this town and the surrounding country can hardly be set forth in the limited space of a newspaper article, but we will give an outline of the principal, that will in a measure satisfy the quest of our enquirer, and others.

The great advantage of Benton is in the fact that it is the geographical center of the largest and richest agricultural and mineral section in Montana, or the entire Rocky Mountain country. This advantage of location is supplemented by the fact that it is the head of navigation on the Missouri river, which makes it the commercial center of the entire tributary district, and conferring upon it an advantage of cheap communication with the East at rates which are not greatly above those current west of the Mississippi. Business and enterprise in the town are only just beginning to develop, only a few lines of trade being at present represented by purely retail houses. The wholesale trade has assumed splendid proportions, and supplies customers far up into the British possessions, eastward to the mouth of the Musselshell and southward to the rivers tributary to the Yellowstone. Manufactures there are none to speak of excepting of brick and stone for building purposes, and with the facilities for the getting of raw material and the development of power to drive machinery, presents the most inviting field for enterprise to be found in the West. Money rules at about 18 per cent. per annum, and the result in the way of profit in its use will range from 25 to 75 per cent. Taxation is comparatively light. Two enterprises in the way of manufacturing are needed badly, one a woolen mill for the making of the heavier kind of woolen goods, such as blankets, etc., and a good merchant flouring mill. The latter, especially, presents an inviting field for a moderate capital, and the agricultural interests of the country are suffering from its lack. Last year over 30,000 barrels of flour were imported from Minnesota and St. Louis at a cost averaging \$1.50 per barrel for transportation, which alone would leave ample margin for all contingencies. The openings for the profitable investment of capital are too numerous for specification, and could only be answered after a special application would define the amount that could be furnished, and the lines desired to enter into. The trades are partially represented—those which are dependent upon building needs are represented sufficiently for the present, as also is the blacksmithing industry. A small machine shop is imperatively needed, and a number of small industries will find here sufficient employment.

It is in our agricultural and stock resources that our field is boundless, and which offer that certainty of profit, and room for rapid and extensive growth that will justify enterprise from those who are unacquainted. The entire country has passed through a winter phenomenal in its severity, and destructive to property beyond any precedent. We of Northern Montana have not wholly escaped, but when we compare our losses with those of the Eastern States, we have reason to feel jubilant at its smallness. The last half of December and the entire month of January was noted for severe cold, the mercury in one case getting as low as 59 below zero, and during the continuance of this long season of cold the greatest fears were entertained that our stock interests would suffer almost total annihilation. But in February the weather moderated, and by the 20th of that month spring had fairly set in, and up to this date has been marked with no check whatever. The anticipated losses have been brought down as low as 10 per cent. on an average, though there are isolated cases of much greater, which were due in the main to causes of management for which the climate is not responsible. A few ranges which were overstocked suffered, and even these more from peculiar local conditions than the severe cold. Sheep that had received proper attention and provision did not suffer at all; where they had none, as in failure to supply

sheds for shelter and a stock of hay, suffered severely; but the entire loss will not average 10 per cent. Horses passed through without being perceptibly affected.

Taken altogether, in connection with the severity of the winter, the loss to stock is so small as to be a matter of congratulation, for it has demonstrated the safety of the country for stock operations, on the principle that whatever survived the past season could stand the test of any, as it is safe to presume that it was the worst possible, and it is certain that it was the worst known to the oldest inhabitants.

In agriculture there is no practicable limit to the capacity of the country for cereal production. The broad plateau which extends from the Rockies to Lake Superior is capable of being turned into one vast wheat field, the deep alkaline soils being practically inexhaustible. They are as yet, west of the Missouri undeveloped from want of population and markets. But enough has been done to demonstrate its limitless capacity for agriculture, and the land only awaits the plow to be ranked as the granary of the nation. Vegetables of all sorts and small fruits grow luxuriantly. Apples will also thrive, but require a different treatment than in the heavily wooded countries. The peach does not thrive, but the plum and cherry are indigenous in several varieties which could be easily improved.

At present the wealth of the country lies in its luxurious and nutritious grass, in which no section of the world furnishes better nor more abundantly.

Taken as a whole we can invite investigation into our resources with a confidence justified by the result of the past winter, and invite all who find their way too crowded to come here and share with us in our natural wealth, and assist us to develop this magnificent country up to the splendid future which is in store for it.

It may be fortunate for the peace of this country that its people are so prosperous that even the most earnest efforts on the part of the American House of Lords to introduce anarchy will not unsettle it. But this golden era will sometime have an end. The spectacle presented with every administration of a band of predatory senators placing themselves against the people by stopping the governmental machinery, and prostituting its legitimate functions by an unseemly and corrupt scramble for the control of patronage, is fast placing the government in contempt among the people, and causing a loss of confidence in republican institutions.

The United States is an oligarchy of the most pronounced type, and the influence of the people upon it is reduced to a mere matter of public opinion, which has just as much effect in Russia and Germany as here. This oligarchy has grown gradually out of the influence of the States in the Senate, and has been carefully nurtured by the leaders in the States for the perpetuation of their power, until the power of the general government has been reduced to a mere expression.

The present dead-lock is apparently a fight between the two great parties for the control of a few petty offices in the Senate, but only apparently, for under the surface is the upas of States Rights, which has for forty years been the great disturbing cause in American politics, and which has already resulted in the bloodiest war of the age, and which will result in another if the senatorial power is not broken by the government peaceably.

The spectacle of the Conkling dictating to the government its functions and its policy is humiliating, and when he is seen in league with other state dictators in both parties, in an attempt to force the government into submission, it becomes disheartening. Popular influence cannot affect it because popular influence cannot make itself felt.

Let us see how this thing is managed. The senator has a numerous following which swears unflinching allegiance to him, in every county, township and hamlet in the State. The opposition has another of the same description; all are held together by a hunger for office. Little country newspapers are planted by these leaders and kept alive by their subsidies. The leaders are in combination with railroad companies, mining companies, and all the large corporations, who furnish certain of the sinews which are required to maintain this feudal organization. Members of the Legislature are carefully selected who will favor the views and blindly follow the leader's behests, and bind themselves to serve the interests of "property," which usually means railroad stock, bonds and other matters of like nature which the people have generously donated. When they are selected, a caucus is called, and members elected to convention who will vote as they are bid; the voters in caucus are usually given their choice of two; it will make no difference which is elected, both being in the service of their feudal lord, the senator. With the people generally accorded a choice between two packed members, they are left to nominate one of them. If by some mischance some one is nominated in opposition, and goes to convention in favor of an independent candidate, if the senator has not a hopeless majority which will admit of his ig-

norning the independent, he will be interviewed and various positions offered himself and his friends, and a goodly installment of cash besides, before which the independent candidate, finding that he is likely to be beat anyway, will accept, usually because, after thinking it over, the best interests of the State can be served by keeping intact the party organization, and he would rather see a Republican get it than a Democrat, or *vice versa*. So the Legislature is chosen from the element which is favorable to the senator, and the senator is duly elected. Should the Legislature be evenly balanced it becomes a personal fight between the Republican and Democratic senatorial aspirants, and both are striving for exactly the same thing by exactly the same means, and the fight depends upon which can buy the most votes.

By such means the senatorial hold on a State is perpetuated, and if the senator is tired of serving himself, he gets a favorite creature nominated in his place. In order to keep this power he must have the dispensation of all the patronage he can possibly get, and interference by the government must be fought, even if the government is paralyzed.

We all know how hopeless the government was to restrain the Southern senators, and how their arrogance finally resulted in the civil war. Then for a time, we had a government, but in the place of a Southern Democratic cabal, we have now a Northern Republican cabal, which is a distinction without a difference. This cabal has created all the disturbance in our government since the war; it has fanned the dying embers of civil strife in the South, and kept alive the sectionalism and weakness which is a necessity of their power. It defied Grant and finally won him over; it defied Hayes, and, not winning him, ignored him; it is defying Garfield and the whole country, and may succeed in winning him or in ignoring him, for in the matter of senatorial privilege, support may be looked for from both parties.

But there are many signs that the people are awakening to this danger. In fact for ten years they have been making earnest protest in the way for reform and a new order of things, but the cry has been stifled by hopeless division—division which is vitalized by all the senatorial and office-holding influence, and it will be divided and stifled until we get a President who will dare to defy the party whip and the party organization.

Every nation in Europe has passed through this very phase of government, and all but Spain have outgrown it, and Spain is rapidly releasing herself of it. In Rome during the social wars, it was the people against the Senate. When it took form, Marius led the people and Sylla the Senate, and for many years it seemed that there was no help from oligarchical rapacity, but an obscure protegee of Pompey's, Julius Cesar, took up the cause where Marius had left it, and finally destroyed the oligarchy, but not without becoming a sacrifice to its venom. When Germany was a prey to its feudal barons, and in the state of anarchy which created a feudal despotism, an obscure Count of Hapsburg arose and planted himself on the popular wrongs, and with the popular support destroyed the feudal system of Southern Germany and founded the first great empire of the modern world. France was torn by internal wars and popular servitude, until the petty King of Navarre espoused the popular cause and paved the way for the destruction of an arrogant nobility which Richelieu and Louis XIV finally subordinated and the revolution totally overthrew. Northern Germany was the prey of adventurers of church and state until the petty Elector of Brandenburg by an accident was raised to a petty kingship, and, having sagacity, espoused the popular cause and begun that system of popular education and development which has resulted in the great German empire, and begun that systematic suppression of the feudal barons, whom Bismarck has totally overthrown. A petty Count of Holstein is now Czar of Russia because he has destroyed a tyrannical nobility and worked for popular elevation. In the wars between the crown and the feudal nobles in England, the crown was triumphant only by making alliance with the people, and creating a House of Commons, and has always granted extended powers to the people when its existence was threatened by cabalistic intrigue, (a phase not yet complete, and which may take an altogether different and democratic form before it is completed). In Italy it has been the same story of cabal and weakness, of aristocratic arrogance and popular servitude, until the petty King of Sardinia, by alliance with the democrats, has crushed the aristocratic power and united Italy. It is the same in Spain—only a few years since Don Carlos at the head of the old aristocracy was trying to suppress development and regain power with the aid of a church which had impoverished the people. But the people have the victory thus far and every prospect of greater in the future.

Of them all, we in America seem most hopelessly in the power of anti-democratic influence, and although we are not oppressed by a hereditary aristocracy, there is planted and growing thriftily an oligarchy, more dangerous, more irresponsible, more unscrupulous, and robbing us all with a vigor which feudal baron or autocratic king never dared nor dreamed of, and which will require a Julius Cesar or a French revolution to overthrow. Which!